

Literature for Competitive Exam
Prof. Aysha Iqbal
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

Module - 07
Lecture – 26
Indian Writing in English: Novel and Poetry

Welcome friends to week 7 and this is the first lecture of week 7 although it may be one of the you know one this is the pen ultimate week for us. This is an 8 week course English or literature in English for competitive purposes, we are already nap and ultimate week and this week we are going to devote to practicing and learning something about Indian writing in English including and prose, fiction, novels poetry and drama along with that there we will be also some attention paid to contemporary south Asian as well as Asian writing in English. See you can see that lets go is vast as usual and I have been saying it from the very introductory lecture that this course is meant for those who already have a preexisting knowledge of English literature, who just want to do this course in order to refresh revise and also practice.

Literary text and some knowledge of literary movement so, that they you know it is meant to facilitate people who want to appear for competitive exams. So, this is not something that is going to start from by scratch, I will be for example, at some stage I will be testing you on Girish Karnad, I need not tell you who Girish Karnad is at some stage I will be talking about or testing you on a certain contemporary works of fiction by Indian writer. So, let us assume Amit Choudhary or Amitabh Ghosh and their works patern would be the same that we have been doing so far. You there will be lot of practice test and that was the intention of this course this course was definitely not meant for those who have who know nothing about English literature and who have joined this course to learn about English literature.

So, having said that let us move on to the three doyens of Indian novels in English, R K Narayan raja Rao mulk raj Anand. R K Narayan you can see the dates here 1906 to 2005 is of course, he does not need any introduction a luminary a leading figure of early Indian novel in English and literature in English he is known for his simplicity and he also is known he is also known for creating that marvelous fictitious village called Malgudi. Just like what is contemporized in America particularly William Faulkner we

have been talking about William Faulkner and the imaginary county that he had created in his works.

So, likewise R K Narayan simple writing style often compared to William Faulkner, he is works include of course, the guide is preminent its stand stall emits all works anywhere in the world the bachelor of arts the financial man the English teacher a tiger from Malgudi the darkroom mister Sampath man eater of Malgudi. So, those are the some of his best known best loved works truly a man or a novelist from India who is very well respected and love throughout the world. His Malgudi is a semi urban fictional town in southern India, and he sets most of his stories there. A word about Narayan he was a reporter for a newspaper called the justice, and then in that mean time he send the manuscript of swami and friends to his friend to one of his friends at oxford university who in turn showed it to the very renowned author Graham Greene and Greene help the book get published.

His Narayan second novel was the Bachelor of Arts, it was based on his experiences at college. So, partially autobiographical; in 1938 Narayan wrote his third novel called the dark room with dealt with the subject and it is rather darkish novel by Narayan standards, he see he is a very pleasant writer to read, but the dark room has the subject of emotional abuse within a marriage and that is what gives it that dark and the current. Again he came up with the English teacher which was more autobiographical than any of his prior no novels and then he went on with mister Sampath the financial expert waiting for the mahatma he wrote the guide in 1956 which is his magnum opus and they he wrote it while he was storing united the united states, the novel one him the Sahitya academy award.

In 1961 he wrote his next novel called the man eater of Malgudi which is an immensely witty and satirical novel one has to read, and read the novel to understand what I mean. He wrote a mythological called gods demons and others, gods demons and others a collection of short stories and his younger brother R K Laxman would often illustrate his work and R L Laxman again does not need an introduction he was a famous cartoonist. In 1967 Narayan wrote the vendor of sweets, later on he was asked by the government of Karnataka to write a book to promote tourism and then he wrote above call the emerald route in 1980. The next great writer from the Indian novel tradition Raja Rao 1908 to 2006 Kantapura the cows of the barricades Comrade Kirillov k i r i double l o v; the

chess master and his moves Raj Rao was born in the state of Karnataka he studied at Aligarh Muslim university and also at Nizams college Hyderabad at the age of 19 he went to France and he also studied at pre university of Sorbonne.

His first novel was Kantapura about a village in south India, which is affected by the ideologies of Mahatma Gandhi. This book was published in the United States in 1938 and then his next great work the serpent and the rope was published in 1960. In between he did a lot of work including the cause of the barricades which was of 1947 work in the year of are independence. The cat and Shakespeare comrade Kirillov chess master and his moves which was published in 1988. Mulk Raj Anand who will between 1905 and 2004 he was born in Peshawar. He is again a prominent Indian author of novels also short stories critical essays in English generally he is referred to as a founder of the English language Indian novels. He studied at Punjab university in Lahore and later at the university of Cambridge and also at university college in London his novels include untouchable 1935 and also coolly.

Now, the he is one writer who relentlessly examine. So, that explodes the problems of poverty in Indian society. Other works include the village the sode and the sikkil and the big heart. Another thing that you should know about Mulk raj Anand at that he is the founder of Marg and art quarterly magazine which started from 1946 and then he also worked on a projected 7 volume autobiography, autobiographical novel rather which was called 7 edges of man. So, these are the three doyens of Indian novels in English. We will be talking more about the novelists perhaps you are more familiar with raise the onwards including Kiran Desai Arundhati Roy and Amitabh Ghosh, Amit Choudhary. So, we will be doing more of these novelas also, but I just wanted to kick start this week by giving you a very very brief introduction to three of the great masters we owe a lot to them Indian English Indian writing in English owes a lot to these three writers.

Again a word about the way we have been preceding I know that is much more to all the writers that we have been talking about, but the scope and intention of the course was to help you practice with for your exams. So, it is not that we are going to now do an in depths study of each and every writer and each and every work that we are going to talk about, rather the intention is that you refresh and practice works you already know and if in the course of the these practice test, you come across things you do not know and it is about time that you get acquainted with that. So, please do not confuse the objective of

the course with anything we are not doing, and analytical or an in depth kind of course, about literature.

The scope of the work of the course has been such that we have been doing so much of work from all parts of the world we did not just do American writing or British writing or classic Greek writings we have done almost everything. In the last week we will be doing world literature which will be heavily dominated by European classics. As well as some works of American literature and other parts of the world also let an America and all, but at the same we have to understand that you cannot in our course like that you cannot expect me to cover each and every area. Is that that is get acquainted with what it takes for young experience to appear for a course or for an exam of this nature of competitive nature.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:50)

Practice Test: Read the following

- India, 1857--the year of the Great Mutiny, when Muslim soldiers turned in bloody rebellion on their British overlords. This time of convulsion is the subject of J. G. Farrell's....., widely considered one of the finest British novels of the last fifty years.

Farrell's story is set in an isolated Victorian outpost on the subcontinent. Rumors of strife filter in from afar, and yet the members of the colonial community remain confident of their military and, above all, moral superiority. But when they find themselves under actual siege, the true character of their dominion--at once brutal, blundering, and wistful--is soon revealed.

..... is a companion to *Troubles*, about the Easter 1916 rebellion in Ireland, and *The Singapore Grip*, which takes place just before World War II, as the sun begins to set upon the British Empire. Together these three novels offer an unequalled picture of the follies of empire.

Let us move on to the first practice test today, look at this read the following. India 1857 the year of the great mutiny, when Muslim soldiers turned in bloody rebellion on their British overlords. This time of convulsion is the subject of J.G Farrell's dash widely considered one of the finest British novels of the last fifty years. Farrell's story is set in an isolated Victorian outpost on the subcontinent. Rumors of strife filter in from afar, and yet the members of the colonial community remain confident of their military and above all, moral superiority. But when they find themselves under actual siege, the true character of their dominion at once brutal blundering and wistful is soon revealed dash is

a companion to troubles about the Easter 1916 rebellion in Ireland, and the Singapore Grip, which takes place just before the second world war, as the sun begins to set upon the British Empire. Together these three novels offer an unequalled picture of the follies of empire.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:10)

1. Identify the novel

- a. The Untouchable
- b. The Siege of Krishnapur
- c. A Flight of Pigeons
- d. Twilight in Delhi

Identify the novel a. The Untouchable; b. The Siege of Krishnapur; c. A flight of pigeons, d twilight in Delhi.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:21)

2. Read the following:

"Velayudhan Nair says: 'Man, we go to the doctor.' Velayudhan Nair always began every sentence with Man, for he had been to Bombay. In Colaba every De Souza says: Man. This they learned from the P & O ships. And P & O ships touch Plymouth. Do they say 'Man' there, one wonders.

'So, man, we go to the doctor,' he repeated.

'Mr Man, I come,' said Govindan Nair. He sometimes used Mister to show he too could be elegant. He called his son Mr Shridhar. ('Mr Shridhar, go and get me a chew,' 'Mr Shridhar, the thing that father puffs is wanted,' etc. etc. Mr Shridhar therefore brought the chew tobacco or that which father puffs, according to orders.)"

Read the following: Velayudhans Nair says, ‘Man, we go to the doctor. ‘Velayudhan Nair always begin every sentence with Man, for he had been to Bombay. In Colaba every De Souza says: Man this they learned from the P and O ships. And P and O ships touch Plymouth. Do they say man there one wonders. So, man we go to the doctor, he repeated. Mister man I come, said Govindan Nair. He sometimes used mister to show he too could be elegant. He called his son Mister Shridhar. Mister Shridhar, go and get me a chew, “Mister Shridhar the thing that father puffs, is wanted etc etc mister Shridhar therefore, brought the chew tobacco or that which father puffs according to orders.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:16)

Identify the novel:

- a. The Serpent and the Rope
- b. The Man eater of Malgudi
- c. A Backward Place
- d. The Cat and Shakespeare

Identify the novel; a. The serpent and the rope; b. The man eater of Malgudi; c. A backward place; d. The Cat and Shakespeare.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:29)

3. Identify the novel:

- RK Narayan tells the story of a spoilt young man called Sriram, who is an orphan being taken care of by his grandmother. His life proceeds in an aimless manner till a young girl, Bharati, accosts him for a donation. She turns out to be a worker in Gandhi's camp, as discovered by Sriram when he follows her.

Identify the novel now here R K Narayan tells the story of a spoilt young man called Sriram, who is an orphan being taken care of by his grandmother his life proceeds in an aimless manner till a young girl, Bharati accosts him for a donation she turns out to be a worker in Gandhi's camp as discovered by Sriram when he follows her.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:57)

- a. Waiting for the Mahatma
- b. Waiting for Gandhi
- c. Waiting for Mahatma Gandhi
- d. Freedom at Midnight

Which novel of R K Narayan a waiting for the mahatma, b waiting for Gandhi, c waiting for Mahatma Gandhi, d freedom at Midnight.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:09)

4. Identify the writer:

- Mr. Morris: We visited Japan. We just loved Japan, my wife and I. Great place Japan. So we thought, Why not India this year, another great place. I've got this magazine, see. It could be sold here to your people - Back in the states, its popular. Millions of copies are sold. You have a big population, don't you!
- Prof. Shah: Five hundred million people.
- Mr.Morris: Five hundred million, Christ. Takes your breath away, doesn't it?
- Prof.Shah: It takes our breath away, Mr. Morris. We can hardly breathe.

Number 4 identify the writer. Mister Morris see this is the play, we visited Japan we just loved Japan my wife and I great place Japan.

So, we thought why not India this year another great place, I have got this magazine see it could be sold here to your people back in the states its popular millions of copies are sold you have a big population do not you professor shah 500 million people mister Morris 500 million Christ takes your breath away does not it, the professor shah it takes our breath away mister Morris we can hardly breathe.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:51)

- a. Manju Kapur
- b. Nissim Ezekiel
- c. AK Ramanujan
- d. Ruskin Bond

Who is the a writer; a. Manju Kapur; b. Nissim Ezekiel; c. AK Ramanujan; d. Ruskin bond.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:00)

Read the following excerpt :

- May he sit still, they said
May the sins of your previous birth
be burned away tonight, they said.
May your suffering decrease
the misfortunes of your next birth, they said.
May the sum of all evil
balanced in this unreal world

against the sum of good
become diminished by your pain.
May the poison purify your flesh

Read the following excerpt from uppum, may he sit still they said may the sins of your previous birth be burned away tonight they said may your suffering decrease the misfortunes of your next birth they said may the sum of all evil balanced in this unreal world against the sum of good, become diminished by your pain may the poison purify your flesh.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:30)

5. Answer the following

Who is suffering in the poem?

- a. The poet's wife
- b. His sister
- c. His mother
- d. His daughter

Answer the following who is suffering in the poem it is a very well-known poem, a. The poet's wife, b. The poet sister, c. His mother, d. His daughter.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:44)

6.

What is the cause of her suffering?

- a. A snake bite
- b. A scorpion bite
- c. A mysterious disease
- d. Poisonous medication

Number 6 what is the cause of a Suffering a snakebite, b. A scorpion bite, c. A mysterious disease, d. Poisonous medication number 7.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:57)

7. The poet is also the author of

- a. The Unfinished Man
- b. Delhi: A Novel
- c. The Vermilion Boat
- d. Nectar in a Sieve

The poet is also the author of a. The unfinished man, b. Delhi a novel, c. The vermilion boat, d. Nectar in a sieve. Now say again where we are what I am trying to get it you may not be aware of any one of these works, all these works are extremely important, if

you do not know for some reason you haven't been taught these works in your institution in your college then do not get nervous just look these works up in this day of the internet everything is available, you just need a facilitator and a guide once a little bit of self-motivation to learn more about these works. So, if you do not know these works or any of these novels or any of these poems is not a problem do not expect the course instructor to tell you give your information about each one of it please look them up do your own research that is what I have been telling you all this while.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:08)

8. Identify the work:

- After living all my life in my own country, India, and being very much of a home-keeping person even there, I went abroad for the first time at the age of fifty-seven. It was in the spring of 1955 that I paid a short visit of five weeks to England, rounding it off with two weeks in Paris and one in Rome. As it happened, on the day I boarded the aeroplane for England, I was exactly 2,992 weeks old, and I spent eight weeks outside my country, thus completing a round three-thousand-week span by the time I returned to Delhi.

Number 8 identify the work. After leaving all my life in my own country, India, and being very much of a home-keeping person even there, I went abroad for the first time at the age of 57. It was in these spring of 1955 that I have paid a short visit of 5 weeks to England, rounding it off with two weeks in Paris and one in Rome. As it happened, on the day I boarded the aeroplane for England, I was exactly 2992 weeks old, and I spent eight weeks outside my country, thus completing a round 3000 week span by the time I returned to Delhi.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:55)

- a. India: From Midnight to the Millennium
- b. Truth, Love and a Little Malice
- c. A Passage to England
- d. The Discovery of India

A. India: from midnight to the millennium, b. Truth, love and a Little Malice, c. A Passage to England, d. The Discovery of India.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:07)

9. The work belongs to the genre of

- a. Sci-fi
- b. Travelogue
- c. Self-help
- d. Spirituality

Number 9 the work belongs to the genre of a Sci-fi, b. Travelogue, c. Self-help, d. Spirituality.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:17)

10. The author also wrote:

- a. The Foreigner
- b. Crossing of Rivers
- c. The Private Life of Indian Prince
- d. Autobiography of an Unknown Indian

Number 10 this author that we whose pacifier just seen the author also wrote; a. The foreigner, b. Crossing of rivers, c. The private life of Indian prince, d. Autobiography of an Unknown Indian.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:35)

11. Read the following:

- *'My mother's parents were both doctors...and Roman Catholics. My paternal grandfather was an engineer, and a Roman Catholic too, but the Hindu caste system of their forefathers had worked on Indian Catholics over the years, splitting them into communities: and my parents' families came from different Catholic communities. A great deal of fuss ensued, but in 1937 my parents married, and on July 19th, 1938, I was born.'*

Number 11 read the following; my mother's parents were both doctors and Roman Catholics. My paternal grandfather was an engineer, and a roman catholic too, but the Hindu caste system of their forefathers had worked on Indian Catholics over the years, splitting them into communities: and my parents families came from different Catholic

communities. A great deal of fuss ensued, but in 1937 my parents married, and on July 19th, 1938, I was born who is this right.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:15)

- a. Letters from Europe
- b. My Son's Father
- c. The Nowhere Man
- d. My Dateless Diary

So, a. The work is from letters from Europe, b. My son's father, c. The nowhere man, d. My dateless diary.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:26)

12. The author also wrote

- a. Never at Home
- b. The Strange Case of Billy Biswas
- c. Across the Black Waters
- d. The Apprentice

Number 12 this author also wrote; a. Never at home, b. The strange case of Billy Biswas, c. Across the black waters, d. The apprentice.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:45)

13.

- the first work to employ “rigmarole English,” a mishmash of Indian rhythms and English propriety. The protagonist is part-Malay, part-Anglo. One of his description includes: “My poor-taste compliment as to his sister, and his vulgar return tribute-abuse as to my mother, absolutely established cordial relations between us, both in the E minor and the D major, so to speak.”

All these are extremely well known works of Indian writing in English please look them up. Number 13 this is a commentary on a work, the first work to employ “rigmarole English,” a mishmash of Indian rhythms and English propriety. The protagonist is part Malay, part Anglo. One of his description includes: “My poor-taste compliment as to his sister, and his vulgar return tribute-abuse as to my mother, absolutely established cordial relations between us, both in the E minor and the D major, so to speak.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:21)

Identify the novel:

- a. A House for Mr. Biswas
- b. Midnight’s Children
- c. All About H . Hatterr
- d. Voices in the City

Identify the novel a. A House for mister Biswas, b. Midnights Children, c. All about hatterr d. Voices in the City.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:35)

14. The work had an “introduction” by

- a. James Joyce
- b. Simone de Beauvoir
- c. Anthony Burgess
- d. George Orwell

Number 14, this work that we have the same rigmarole English the work had an introduction by a. James Joyce, b. Simone de Beauvoir, c. Anthony burgess, d. George Orwell.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:51)

15. Read the following:

- The collection of poems describes a day trip to a pilgrimage town in Maharashtra. Both devotion and commercialism populate the town, and the man we follow doesn't search for enlightenment; he's sightseeing.

Next one read the following the collection of poems describes a day trip to a pilgrimage town in Maharashtra. Both devotion and commercialism populate the town and the man we follow does not search for enlightenment he is sightseeing.

(Refer Slide Time: 23:11)

Identify the poet

- a. Dilip Chitre
- b. Humayun Kabir
- c. Keki N. Daruwala
- d. Arun Kolatkar

(Refer Slide Time: 23:20)

16. Read the following

- The novel tells the story of the partition of India through the eyes of young Lenny, a Parsee girl growing up in Lahore. Lenny narrates the events of her family and native Lahore over more than a ten year period, from before World War II to just after Indian independence and the partition.

Identify the poet a. Dilip Chitre, b. Humayun Kabir, c. Keki n Daruwalla, d. Arun Kolatkar. Number 16 read the following; the novel tells the story of the partition of India through the eyes of young Lenny a Parsee girl growing up in Lahore.

Lenny narrates the events of her family and native Lahore over more than a ten year period, from the before Second World War to just after Indian independence and the partition.

(Refer Slide Time: 23:44)

Identify the novel:

- a. A Train to Pakistan
- b. Cracking India
- c. Autobiography of an Unknown Indian
- d. Clear Light of Day

Identify the novel: a. Train to Pakistan, b. Cracking India, c. Autobiography of an unknown Indian, d. Clear light of day.

(Refer Slide Time: 23:55)

17. The novel belongs to the genre of

- a. Spiritual
- b. Gothic
- c. Partition
- d. Romantic

Number 17 the novel belongs to the genre of spiritual gothic partition romantic.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:05)

18. Identify the novel:

- Deven earns a living by teaching [Hindi](#) literature to uninterested college students. As his true interests lie in [Urdu](#) poetry, he jumps at the chance to meet the great Urdu poet, Nur. Under the advice of his friend Murad, an editor of a periodical devoted to Urdu literature, Deven procures a secondhand tape recorder so that he can help transcribe Urdu's early poetry, as well as conduct an interview or even write the memoirs of Nur. However, things do not happen as he expects them to.

Number 18 identify the novel here deven earns a living by teaching Hindi literature to uninterested colleges students, as his true interests lie in Urdu poetry he jumps at the chance to meet the great Urdu poet Nur. Under the advice of his friend Murad an editor of a periodical devoted to Urdu literature, Deven procures a secondhand tape recorder.

So, that he can help transcribe Urdu's early poetry as well as conduct an interview or even write the memoirs of Nur; however, things do not happen as he expects them to.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:50)

- a. In Custody
- b. That Long Silence
- c. Shame
- d. Sunlight on a Broken Column

Identify the novel a. In custody, b. That Long Silence, c. Shame, d. Sunlight on a Broken Column and here are the answers.

(Refer Slide Time: 25:00)

Answers

1. B. The Siege of Krishnapur by J.G. Farrell
2. D. The Cat and Shakespeare by Raja Rao
3. A. Waiting for the Mahatma by R.K. Narayan
4. B. Nissim Ezekiel's The Sleepwalkers

You can take a look at the answers please look, at the slide the first one is b the siege of Krishnapur J.G Farrell, number 2 is d the cat and Shakespeare by Raja Rao, number 3 is a waiting for the mahatma by R K Narayan number 4 is B. Nissim Ezekiel's the sleepwalkers.

(Refer Slide Time: 25:26)

5. C. His mother (The Night of the Scorpion by Nissim Ezekiel)
6. B. a scorpion bite
7. A. The Unfinished Man by Nissim Ezekiel
8. C. A Passage to England by Nirad C. Chaudhuri
9. B. Travelogue
10. D. Autobiography of an Unknown Indian

Number 5 a C. His mother the Night of he is taken from the night of by Scorpion by Nissim Ezekiel, number 6 B. The writers mother suffers from a scorpion bite, number the poem itself is called the night of the scorpion number 7 is a the unfinished man by Nissim Ezekiel number 8 a c a passage to England by nirad c Chaudhuri and it belongs to the genre of travelogue.

So, 9 d number 10 is d Nirad c Chaudhuri also wrote autobiography of an unknown Indian.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:05)

11. B. My Son's Father by Dom Moraes
12. A. Never at Home
13. C. All About H. Hatterr by G.V. Desani
14. C. Anthony Burgess
15. D. Arun Kolatkar's Jejuri
16. B. Cracking India
17. Partition
18. A . In Custody by Anita Desai

Number 11 is b. My son's father by Dom Moraes, number 12 is A. Never at home, number 13 is C. All about H. Hatterr by G.V Dasani, number 14 is C. Anthony Burgess number 15 is D. Arun Kolatkar's Jejuri the collection of poems, number 16 is B. Cracking India also known as the ice candy man strictly speaking not an Indian writing a novel in English, but from the subcontinent. Number 17 is Partition literature and number 18 is a in custody by Anita Desai

So Thank you very much we will continue with more on Indian novels, Indian poetry in particularly Indian theatre in our next class.